

NAPOLÉON III. CONTEMPLATED MAKING RICHMOND HIS HOME

Two Representatives of
Emperor Came Here in
1871 Seeking House.
CONFERRED WITH HEAD OF
PLANTER'S NATIONAL BANK

Wellington Goddin, Real Estate Dealer, Displayed Mansions to Them.

Empress Eugenie and Emperor Napoleon III.



Heir of the old Napoleonic tradition in France and his beautiful Spanish consort.

By VERA PALMER.
If Napoleon III, Emperor of France, and the lovely Empress Eugenie, who died last July, had come to Virginia after the fall of the second empire and the subsequent rout of the Parisians, they had occupied one of the great mansions on the banks of the historic James River, what would have been the attitude of society toward them? Would the extremely conservative element in the old Dominion have looked askance at the erstwhile ruler, who had not the strength to maintain his throne, and whose English was spoken with a most decided Parisian accent, or would the glamor which seems always to attach itself to royalty, even in exile, and the beauty and charm of his consort, have been of an order to open the hearts of their new neighbors to this once Imperial pair?

In that the high price of real estate and the condition of Napoleon's health were the sole factors preventing the arrival in Virginia of the Emperor and Empress after the release of the former from Germany following the Franco-Prussian War, this thought is worthy of interest. Certainly the strangers would have been spared a repetition of the French experiences from which they were fleeing and would have found here in the New World a calm and safe haven of refuge equal to that afforded at Farnborough Hill or at Chislehurst, in the vicinity of London.

Agents of the Emperor.
In November of 1871 two distinguished looking men, one a native of France and the other an Englishman, came to Richmond bearing all proper credentials which they presented, so the story goes, to John B. Davis, president of the Planter's National Bank. The object of their visit was a secret and as they were thoroughly inconspicuous both in appearance and manner, they attracted practically no attention on the part of the citizens.

But what these strangers told Mr. Davis was that they were the representatives of the former Emperor and Empress, who had expressed a desire to get away from the trouble-torn Europe, finding England even a little too close to the scene of their intense suffering and humiliation, and that they fancied setting up an establishment here in Virginia, where the great American republic had first come into existence.

It was only a few years after the War Between the States and the impoverished condition of the former great slave owners and planters had made it necessary for several estates to be placed on the market, and as times were fearfully hard in the South during those years of Reconstruction the prices asked were comparatively reasonable. The historic homes on the James River were not tormented and many an owner was tormented in spirit at the idea of parting with the roof-tree of his ancestors where American history had been made. But poverty and war had no respecters of persons and some of the fine old places had to go.

Future Seemed Dark.
There was little in the outlook to create optimism, for although the former slaves remained faithful, as was the habit of those of old, yet there was no telling what would be the attitude of the younger generation. Then, too, there was little in the family exchequer of many of those houses with which to pay a small army of servants, and life on the great plantations with insufficient labor was unthinkable to most of the owners. Thus the ancient mansions, the very bricks of many of which are said to have been brought from England, although this point has never been settled satisfactorily, were placed on the market.

When Mr. Davis heard from his callers the object of their visit he may not have been altogether surprised, for in November, 1870, an item appeared in the Richmond Dispatch, immediately ancestor of The Times-Dispatch, that it was rumored in London plans were being negotiated by the representatives of Louis Napoleon for the purchase of a home in Virginia. That, however, was before the days of "streamers" and other big headlines, and as the not was squeezed into about one inch of space it may have been overlooked, except that gentlemen of that day never scanned newspapers; they read them.

The banker then introduced the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon to Wellington Goddin, the foremost real estate man of the day, who was the agent for the James River places, although without mentioning the true object of their visit. He explained that the foreigners desired to look at the plantations with the object of purchasing one. So Mr. Goddin, with that same unquenchable energy and dispatch which prompts real estate men to this day, set out his best wares, to which he had two horses attached, and his most presentable combination of janitor, messenger and coachman, and made ready for the long trip.

Every Comfort Provided.
As it was winter, it is more than probable that the foot-warmer was pressed into service, and if the prosperous real estate dealer was not equipped with these elegant comforts it was a pity, for the Emperor had a few bricks heated in his stove and wrapped in coils. There must have been a horse or two, and like other masters of the day, he was likely to have been read from November until March had been provided, and the Emperor and Empress, whose descendants are successful real estate men today, were over to the Potomac, or the Potomac, or one of the other famous hostlers, for a real old-fashioned Virginia meal to be packed for the party.

It would be had policy to try to make a big deal out of it, almost as foolish as to ask favors of an unpaid husband, which is said to be the policy of the Emperor.

Finally, however, all was in readiness, and the real estate agent, the Frenchman and the Englishman started on their journey. They passed Brandon, Westover and Shirley, Wyanoke, Upper Brandon and Upper Shirley, and with the sighting of each plantation the enthusiasm of the strangers rose. They were delighted where, with their winter, while the admirer of the architecture was unstinted, although both were accustomed to the chateaux and baronial halls of the Old World.

On returning from the trip the visitors disappeared as quietly as they came, and for many a moon Mr. Davis hanged his secret in his heart. But only a few persons find it easy to keep secrets, particularly when they are of a nature known to thousands of people.

But Mr. Davis, excellent citizen and successful business man that he was, it is said, proved to be no more than human. He took a few of his dearest secrets into his confidence, swearing each over to that same degree of secrecy to which he himself was bound, and as is always the way with such things, the bubble burst.

Room in Real Estate.
With what result? The price of the historic homes on the James River rose several hundred per cent. There was a boom in real estate in that section of Virginia. The state was perfectly suitably disposed toward Napoleon and Eugenie, but if they wanted to settle here, they would have to pay for the privilege. For, according to all fair play, an Emperor surely must have money, and the Emperor's money was not to be placed on the market, and as times were fearfully hard in the South during those years of Reconstruction the prices asked were comparatively reasonable. The historic homes on the James River were not tormented and many an owner was tormented in spirit at the idea of parting with the roof-tree of his ancestors where American history had been made. But poverty and war had no respecters of persons and some of the fine old places had to go.

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65 years old now, would be something of a social leader, a member of the Westmoreland Club, and a much-disputed partner of debutantes. The most exclusive Richmond German Club. But again, this heir to an Emperor's crown, who was destined never to wear a crown, was a refugee as was his imperial mother following the downfall of her empire, and life at Brandon, Westover or whatever the place might be, would have entailed the visits of staunch French imperialists or British royalists.

Had the Empress passed her widowhood in Virginia and brought to her new home those treasures of art and invaluable historical relics, which she had inherited from her adopted father, and would local financiers now be searching for means with which to provide a suitable abiding place for them? The women, of course, would be the situation and it must be made to preserve the wonderful legacy as a heritage for generations to come. Not only would money be forthcoming for the purchase, but resolutions innumerable would be passed. For it would be too much to expect the late Eugenie to leave the house itself to Virginia. It is not extravagant to think that in Hollywood if things had been just a little different, or that the Empress would have been the daughter of a nobleman, the body of Eugenie has recently been placed in the hands of an American dentist who has been working on it for some time.

1,000 WOMEN WORK IN
BANKS OF UNIVERSE HUB

Large Proportion of These Are Employed as Experts in All Departments.

POSTON, Jan. 15.—One thousand women are employed in the banks of Boston. This would not be surprising but for the fact that a large proportion are employed as expert clerks—an elastic term—in all departments of the institutions.

The women were employed, in many cases with reluctance, as a emergency when the boys went marching away, but they are said to have shown adaptability to the banking business.

BRITAIN WOULD KEEP
EMIGRANTS AT HOME

Empire Settlement Scheme Has Been Held Up Since War Ended.

LONDON, Jan. 15.—The British government is beginning to put into effect its plan to keep within the boundaries of the British empire the surplus of the population of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Ireland who want to seek new homes in distant parts of the world.

King in Pig Society.
LONDON, Jan. 15.—King George has just been elected a member of the Large Back Pig Society, the Times announces. Members of this society are breeders of famous Berkshires variety of large hogs, some of which were purchased recently from the royal farm at Windsor by King Alfonso of Spain.

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cruise of the "Corona," Cunard liner, which leaves here today. She has been chartered for the occasion by the principal tourist companies, and will inaugurate the reopening of Mediterranean tours after an interval of seven years.

Formerly tourists who visited Jerusalem to take a long, weary journey and often times perilous journey by way of Jaffa. The new route has all the comforts and conveniences of civilization. When the vessel reaches Alexandria a special train, equipped with American Pullman cars, will be in waiting to take the tourists to the famous city of Israel. The new line will find that the Holy Land has already undergone some remarkable changes since the British army began the work of cleaning up, which has been continued by the efficient administration of Sir Herbert Samuel, the present high commissioner of Palestine.

A sanitary system is now being worked out, roads are being rebuilt and prohibition is enforced to a modified extent. In the city limits of Jerusalem, the old bazaars have been put on a new basis, and the old bazaars have been put on a new basis, and the old bazaars have been put on a new basis.

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of almond plantations, orange groves and vineyards.
At the present time Zionists throughout the world are endeavoring to raise \$100,000,000 for the reconstruction of Palestine. Most of this money is being raised from the sale of bonds of the Jewish National Fund, which will be used to develop the land and the Jewish people, but immigration is necessarily restricted on account of the lack of facilities for settlers here, which, without proper sanitary conditions, wholesale immigration would mean inevitable epidemics.

mean inevitable epidemics. When immigration is permitted 15,000 Jews will be allowed to enter Palestine the first year. The Zionist leaders are convinced that the country, which is about the size of New Jersey, will absorb 5,000,000 Jews.
Panama to Welcome Fleets.
(By Associated Press.)
PANAMA, Jan. 15.—Preparations for handling the combined Atlantic and Pacific United States fleets, which will assemble here preparatory to their departure for the Philippines, have been completed by port authorities of this city. The fleet will include fourteen battleships, thirty-six destroyers, two cruisers, sixteen tankers and colliers, supply and hospital ships, eight tenders, ten tugboats, twelve seaplanes and a number of other smaller vessels.

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